

VZCZCXRO2317

OO RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHMOS RUEHPW

DE RUEHNE #2527/01 1031159

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 131159Z APR 06

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2520

INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE

RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 0545

RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 0360

RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 0037

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1425

RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0356

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 4658

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4691

RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0162

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 7643

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2650

RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 5353

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9328

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 7812

RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 0539

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3063

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 3119

RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 3004

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 3326

RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2394

RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 2253

RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 3050

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0151

RHMFIISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2404

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RHMFIISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 002527

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV ECON MNUC KIRF ENRG IN PK

SUBJECT: JASWANT SINGH CAUTIOUS IN MEETING WITH A/S BOUCHER

NEW DELHI 00002527 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: During his April 7 meeting with SCA A/S Boucher, former Indian Foreign Minister and BJP leader Jaswant Singh cautioned that the US and India should not emphasize the nuclear agreement to the exclusion of other bilateral initiatives, but agreed that the two share a civilization and philosophical outlook that will make them excellent partners. Jaswant also expressed caution about the potential benefits of the nuclear agreement, and groused gently about Pakistan, Iran, and China, but warmed up to A/S Boucher's explanation of US vision and efforts to stitch Central and South Asia closer together. Boucher also raised with Jaswant, a Rajasthani, an anti-conversion law the BJP-run Rajasthan parliament passed April 7. Jaswant's lack of criticism in private of the nuclear deal proves the BJP's public opposition is a function of domestic politics, not deeply-rooted conviction. END SUMMARY.

TOO MUCH FOCUS ON NUCLEAR DEAL

12. (C) SCA A/S Boucher reminded Jaswant that the two had worked together in previous jobs and that he continued to value Jaswant's opinion. Jaswant, clearly pleased with the

visit, said it had only been a matter of time before US-India relations came to fruition. He cautioned, however, that it was important not to push the evolution beyond its natural pace; things tended to loosen and people tended to balk when pushed. The nuclear agreement, worried Jaswant, was too much at the forefront of relations, and risked being seen as the totality of ties. The implication one could draw was that if the nuclear deal falls apart, everything goes with it. Such a stance was "dangerous" and "unwise" stressed Jaswant. A/S Boucher countered that while the deal was important, it certainly did not represent the entirety of relations, which continued to grow in new and promising ways. Boucher also made the point that while governments could not directly impact business growth, trade, educational or cultural linkages, or people-to-people contact, they surely could work on nuclear, defense, and regional policy initiatives where their roles were essential. While it was important not to lose sight of the broader relations that form the bulk of relations, stressed Boucher, the nuclear agreement was a powerful symbol of how the US and India -- having solved such a thorny problem -- could work together to accomplish anything in the defense, foreign affairs, and other realms.

WE WILL MAKE A GOOD PARTNER

¶3. (C) Jaswant concurred, but reminisced that when the US was "pillorying" India in 1998 following the nuclear tests, the issue had been a very large symbol indeed. Jaswant posited that the US nonproliferation lobby was passionate about WMD elimination, but insisted India would make a good partner on civilizational and philosophical grounds. He did grouse, however, at the Congress-led UPA government for keeping the

NEW DELHI 00002527 002.2 OF 003

nuclear agreement's details too close to their chest, saying with a twinkle in his eye that their secretive instincts had made it more difficult for him to find fault in their performance, for which he remained quite eager. Speaking with the sweep of history in mind, Jaswant evoked the images of thousands of Indians who thronged streets to greet Eisenhower in 1959, then the decades of disappointment and drift in relations. Boucher agreed that there had been periods of elation and tension, but it was important to think that this phase marked the beginning of a fundamentally different departure from the past oscillations.

MORE CAUTION ON NUCLEAR UPSIDES

¶4. (C) Jaswant, referring to his careful read of the Secretary's testimony and Senator Lugar's remarks, cautioned

SIPDIS
against exaggerated expectations, especially on the energy front. The agreement, he said, was unlikely to boost civilian nuclear power production beyond eight percent of India's needs because money was needed for development and security. On the environmental arguments, he insisted "poverty is the first pollutant," and must remain India's top funding priority.

A DOUR TOUR D'HORIZON...

¶5. (C) Shifting to the neighborhood, Jaswant complained about Chinese/Pakistani nuclear cooperation and the activities of AQ Khan, saying the US maintained total silence on his egregious record, with the exception of the occasional mention. Nevertheless, said Jaswant, it was important to de-hyphenate India and Pakistan, even as the Chinese "resent very much" Sino-Indian hyphenation. Mulling whether or not China was a threat, Jaswant waxed philosophical, saying it was the nature of power to want to multiply. Just as America remained engaged globally to preserve its power, so, too, was China expanding its power and would continue to seek to

become more powerful. Jaswant then proceeded to tick off US activities in Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan that had "stirred" India's broader neighborhood.

FOCUSES ON CENTRAL ASIA

¶6. (C) When asked what India could do to enhance its links to Central Asia, Jaswant curtly said "nothing." Foreign Secretary Saran, he explained, was only a civil servant,

SIPDIS

albeit effective, but it was not his job to make policy. Who, besides Saran, he asked rhetorically, would Boucher speak with in the government of India regarding Central Asia? Recalling his days as a "backpack traveler" in Central Asia, Jaswant said the histories of the nations of that region were intertwined with that of India to the point of inseparability. When Boucher evoked visions of energy and transport links between India and Central Asia, Jaswant pointed to the Pakistani "blockade" of trade between India

NEW DELHI 00002527 003.2 OF 003

and Afghanistan. While India understood US relations with Pakistan, said Jaswant, he recalled how India's donation of 55 trucks had been blocked from overland transit to Afghanistan and had to go by ship via Iran, reinforcing India's relations with that country. The key, said Jaswant, was transit through Pakistan.

ANTI-CONVERSION LAW

¶7. (U) Boucher mentioned how carefully large groups in the US, as well as senior administration officials, were watching the anti-conversion law before the BJP-dominated Rajasthan state assembly. Jaswant, himself from Rajasthan, urged Boucher to read "Haqeeqat," a book published by Emmanuel Mission, the Rajasthan Christian mission whose sales of the book had sparked a backlash that fueled support for the law. Haqeeqat, said Jaswant, was deeply offensive. NOTE: The bill passed 120-60 in the Rajasthan assembly later April 7. END NOTE.

COMMENT: OUT OF POWER BUT NOT OUT OF TOUCH

¶8. (C) Jaswant, a real lion in winter, clearly stays attuned to foreign policy developments as he waits for a return to power. While critical of the UPA government, he did not criticize the US-India nuclear agreement, proving that the senior BJP leadership's public condemnation is more a function of domestic politics than any real conviction. END COMMENT.

¶9. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>
MULFORD